URGENT NEWS ALERT

Energy Bill Is Three Parts Corporate Welfare, One Part Cynical Politics

Vote on House-Senate Conference Report Expected in U.S. House Today

Memo to:	Editorial Writers, Columnists, Reporters, Producers
Memo from:	House Democratic Whip Steny Hoyer and House Energy and Commerce Committee Ranking Democrat John Dingell
Re:	Energy Bill in Congress
Date:	Tuesday, November 18, 2003

Republicans Craft Energy Bill in Secret, Bar Democrats from Meetings

After more than two months of negotiating in secret behind closed doors, Republican conferees on the "Energy Policy Act of 2003" – the first overhaul of national energy policy in more than a decade – announced on Saturday that they had agreed on a 1,6100-page conference report that will be voted on in the House today and in the Senate later this week.

Make no mistake: This conference report is an absolute abomination. It represents an utter failure of the legislative process and is an energy "policy" in name only. Democratic conferees on the energy bill – conferees duly appointed by Senate leaders and Speaker Dennis Hastert – were completely shut out of conference deliberations. As a result, **it should surprise no one that the Republican-crafted conference report seeks to satisfy existing energy producers rather than achieve energy independence and consumer protection.**

Yesterday, Republican conferees convened a conference committee meeting. Democrats were asked to attend, but this was nothing more than a phony attempt to demonstrate that the proper legislative process was followed. The fact is, Democrats were prevented from participating in the drafting of the conference report.

The GOP Bill in a Nutshell: Handouts, Giveaways, Special Interest Favors

The Republican energy bill repeals consumer protection rules, contains harmful and unnecessary environmental provisions and provides embarrassingly large handouts – $23.5 billion in tax breaks at last count – to energy producers. Meanwhile, it essentially does nothing to decrease America's dependence on foreign energy supplies.

The variety and cost of subsidies contained in this conference report have even forced some Republicans to blanch. Senator John McCain (R-AZ) was quoted in CQ Today [11/17/03], a respected Capitol Hill publication, as saying: *"It's the 'Leave No Lobbyist Behind Act.' It's terrible they are putting all that stuff in there. It's like an Iranian bazaar."*

This Conference Report Is Bad for Energy Consumers:

- **It impedes progress toward preventing additional blackouts.** While creating a new "reliability" organization and rules, other provisions may actually deter investment in the transmission grid and regional coordination and planning. Preliminary findings related to the August blackout identify a lack of adequate transmission infrastructure and poor coordination as principal issues. But at the insistence of large Southeastern utilities (and their Republican Senators), provisions were included that stall regional coordination and shift costs to new transmission operators. In addition, it will drive up electricity costs by rewarding companies which have delayed investment in transmission with "incentive rates" for building transmission going forward.

- **It repeals the public-interest restrictions governing monopoly ownership in the utility sector, no doubt setting off a wave of mergers for electric utilities, with little protection for ratepayers.** This provision will ensure that more utilities can be acquired by companies with no track record in providing reliable, affordable electric service.

- **It contains no prohibition for the most egregious of the price-gouging schemes used by Enron**., nor does it provide rate protection from those fraudulent practices.

- It makes rules promulgated by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) more susceptible to legal challenge, **slowing the progress of promoting wholesale markets even further and decreasing FERC's power to respond to market crises like the California electricity crisis in 2000**.

- **It fails to provide the necessary fiscal certainty to enable construction of the Alaska Natural Gas Pipeline, which would** prevent the United States from becoming dependent on imports of natural gas and **create most of the jobs proponents claim the bill would produce**. The primary company interested in the Alaska pipeline has said that it will not pursue it.

This Conference Report Contains Harmful, Unnecessary Environmental Provisions:

- In a major rewrite of existing clean air law that produces no new energy, and promotes additional consumption, the conference report **postpones ozone attainment standards across the country**. This provision was never considered by the House or Senate, but added in conference, disregarding the will of both chambers.

- Again, in a move that produces no additional energy and will only drive up the cost of cleaning up contaminated groundwater supplies for consumers, it **provides legal immunity to MTBE producers.** Furthermore, it would make the effective date of this immunity September 5, 2003, thus barring lawsuits already filed by the states of New Hampshire, California and Connecticut against the industry.

- **It exempts all construction activities at oil and gas drilling sites from coverage**

under the runoff requirements of the Clean Air Water Act, and removes hydraulic fracturing (an underground oil and gas recovery technique) from coverage under the Safe Drinking Water Act.

- It guts weakens environmental review with respect to hydroelectric re-licensing and the National Environmental Policy Act review process with respect to energy production on public lands.

This Conference Report Is a Grab-bag of Goodies for Energy Producers:

- **The cost of this Conference Report has exploded. The tax subsidies for industry now total some $23.5 billion**. Millions of dollars in direct incentive payments are provided to mature energy industries (e.g., hydroelectric plants, new turbines at existing plants) to upgrade equipment that they would normally do otherwise and reduce royalties for development on federal lands. It provides $1.1 billion in new direct spending from the U.S. Treasury to Gulf Coast states and Alaska; $1.5 billion in spending for ultra-deepwater oil and gas research and development, principally benefitting a consortium led by Texas A&M University, the University of Houston and Louisiana State University; $500 million for the Denali Corporation in Alaska; and tens of millions in special royalty payments to the State of Louisiana and three Texas and Louisiana-based oil companies.

- **It reduces royalties paid by energy developers for use of Federal lands.**

It is clear that Republicans have missed an important opportunity with this conference report. As an analysis in *The Washington Post* on Sunday stated:

> *"The energy bill before Congress is a bulky tome of more than 1,000 pages, with thousands of provisions affecting every corner of the country. But for all its size, industry officials and environmental activists of widely divergent viewpoints generally agree that it will have only a modest impact on the nation's most pressing energy problems, including its reliance on foreign energy supplies, an overburdened electricity grid and fuels that pollute the air and may alter the atmosphere."*

Urge Congress to Enact a Real Energy Policy that Meets America's Needs

We encourage you to write editorials and commentaries that urge Congress to scrap this Conference Report and to go back to the negotiating table to craft an energy policy overhaul that actually meets our Nation's energy needs today and in the foreseeable future. **This short-sighted, subsidy-laden Conference Report is not the answer. It is a missed opportunity.**

If you have any questions concerning this Conference Report, please call Stacey Farnen with the Office of the Democratic Whip at 202-225-3130 or Jodi Bennett with the House Energy and Commerce Committee Democratic Staff at 202-225-6353.

Middle Class Squeeze

Rep. George Miller, Committee on Education and the Workforce Democrats

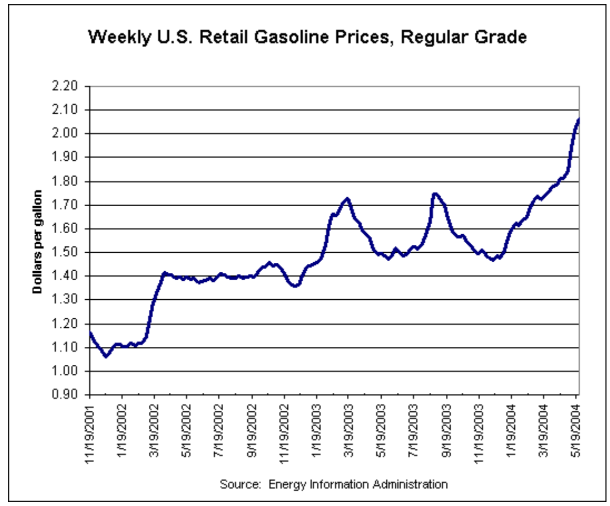
May 27, 2004 ● ISSUE #2

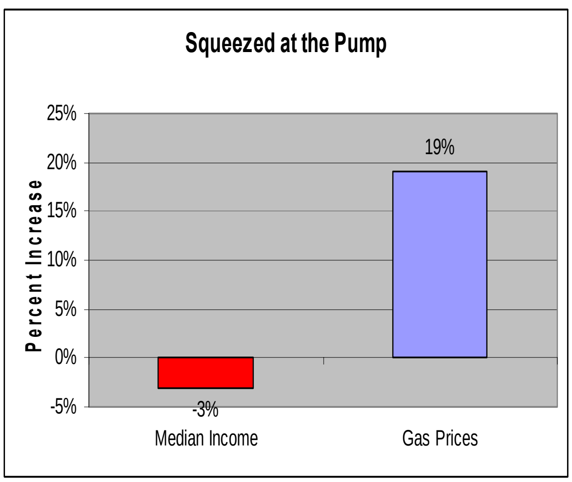
Prices at the Pump: The Bush Gas "Tax"

►Summary: After three months of record high gas prices, middle class families are feeling squeezed by prices at the pump. Experts agree that high gas prices are the equivalent of a tax on consumers, wiping out any benefits of the Bush tax cuts for middle class families.

After three months of record high gas prices across the country, the average cost of a gallon of gasoline is now $2.10, the highest average on record in dollar terms, according to the Lundberg Survey. In the past two weeks alone, gas prices have increased 14 cents a gallon. Skyrocketing gas prices are a "tax" on middle class families, taking money out of their pockets each time they fill up at the pump.

According to *Fortune* Magazine, gas price increases since the beginning of the year have cost American consumers $35 billion, much more then the $15 to $20 billion middle class consumers got from the Bush tax cuts this April. And if gas prices stay high, as experts predict, consumers will lose another $50 billion over the next year due to higher prices at the pump.





Already families are feeling the pinch of higher prices, and the summer driving season has just begun. A recent National Retail Federation survey found that nearly 20 percent of families with annual incomes below $50,000 reported that they had to cut back on grocery spending due to higher gas prices. Among families earning over $50,000 a year, more than one quarter reported that they had cut back on travel, and 15 percent spent less on clothing for their families.

Rising gas prices translate into higher prices on consumer goods and services across the board, further squeezing family budgets by ratcheting up the cost of groceries, travel, and countless other manufactured goods.

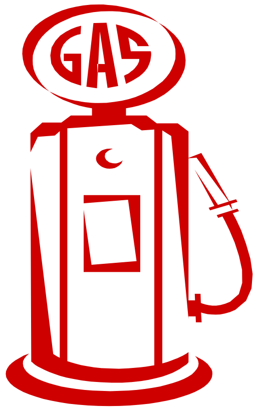
Candidate George Bush promised in 2000 to "jawbone" OPEC if elected president to keep oil prices down. But there is no evidence he has fought for lower oil prices and it is clear that he has no plan for lower gas prices. The Bush/Republican energy bill, which is stalled in Congress, would only <u>increase</u> gas prices, according to the Administration's estimates.

And that's another reason why we call it the "middle class squeeze."

Each week, the **Middle Class Squeeze** looks at different aspects of how Bush Administration and congressional policies are failing the middle class.
For more information, please call 202-225-2095 or visit www.house.gov/georgemiller.

Feeling squeezed? Send us an email about it: middleclasssqueeze@mail.house.gov

Smog & Mirrors



The Cheney Energy Task Force

and

Higher Prices at the Pump

A Report by Congressman George Miller
Co-Chair, Democratic Policy Committee
April 26, 2004

Bush-Cheney Energy Policy: SMOG and Mirrors

On April 27, the United States Supreme Court will begin oral arguments on one of the most important cases of our time: *Cheney v. U.S. D.C. District of Columbia*. The Court will consider whether the Bush Administration should have to abide by a Federal law that requires government agencies to disclose connections with lobbyists. The White House believes it should be exempt from the statute, but watchdog groups contend that no one should be above the law when it comes to protecting the public's interest.

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At the root of the *Cheney* case is a battle between environmental groups and the Bush White House over how much influence special interests had in formulating the Administration's proposed energy policy. **The truth is that energy interests have extensive influence in the Bush Administration, and consumers are paying the price for it at the pumps.**

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The Bush Administration has a record of missed opportunities when it comes to developing new strategies for energy and for gas prices in our country. Instead of implementing forward-thinking energy policies to reduce our reliance on foreign oil and bring down gas prices, this Administration has instead cozied up to corporate interests, giving former lobbyists jobs at the White House and inviting industry insiders to write energy policy. The result: record energy prices for consumers.

President Bush has stocked his Administration with former oil industry and gas lobbyists. And energy interests have funneled millions of dollars into Republican campaign coffers. Top energy CEO's count themselves among Bush's Pioneers – fundraisers who have raised more than $100,000 for the Bush-Cheney campaigns. With special interests so closely tied to the White House, it should come as no surprise that when the President's Energy Task Force – led by Vice President Cheney – sat down to make recommendations for the nation's energy policy, they invited corporate interests to the White House to write the agenda and the legislation. Between January and September 2001, corporate energy lobbyists had more then 700 direct contacts with the Administration.

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Not surprisingly, the Bush-Cheney Energy Task force recommendations – and the Republican Energy bill that followed - were little more then a laundry list of handouts to the energy industry. According to the Administration's own experts at the Energy Information Administration (EIA), that Republican bill would actually increase the price of gas at American pumps. And President Bush, despite promising to stand up to OPEC to keep fuel costs in check, has let gas prices reach record highs.

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This report documents the close ties between the Administration and the energy industry and the failure, as a result, of the Administration to implement energy policies that benefit American consumers. As you consider the Supreme Court deliberations in the Cheney energy task force case, please keep the findings of this report in mind.

Bush and OPEC: All Bark, No Bite

Since taking office, President Bush has failed to live up to his promise to stand up for American consumers by putting pressure on oil producing nations to increase their output. As a result, in April, OPEC imposed a cut in oil production. Experts predict gas prices could reach $3 dollars a gallon this summer.

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During the 2000 Presidential election campaign, Gov. George W. Bush promised to take on the OPEC cartel on behalf of American consumers:

⇒ **GOVERNOR BUSH:** "I think the president ought to get on the phone with the OPEC cartel and say, 'We expect you to open your spigots,'" Bush said. "The president of the United States must jawbone OPEC members to lower the price." [Financial Times, 2/2/00]

⇒ **GOVERNOR BUSH:** "I would work with our friends in OPEC to convince them to open up the spigot, to increase the supply. Use the capital that my administration will earn, with the Kuwaitis or the Saudis, and convince them to open up the spigot." [New York Times, 6/28/00]

⇒ **GOVERNOR BUSH:** "It's important for the president to explain [to oil producing nations], in clear terms, what high energy prices will not only do to our economy, but what high energy prices will do to the world economy." [*CNN*, 1/26/00]

⇒ **GOVERNOR BUSH:** "We're dependent upon crude. … I would hope the administration would convince our friends in OPEC to open the spigots." [Los Angeles Times, 6/22/00]

Under Bush, Gas Prices Have Reached Record Highs. According to the Department of Energy's weekly survey, gas prices in April 2004 hit a nearly 13-year high. Gas prices have increased nearly 35 cents since mid December, rising three cents in just the past two weeks. Economists estimate that each one-cent rise in gas prices costs the American economy $1 billion. [Los Angeles Times, 4/20/04, San Francisco Chronicle, 4/20/04, USA Today, 4/20/04, Bloomberg.com: News & Commentary, Reuters, 4/23/04, CNN.com, 4/25/04]

Deleted: , and experts are predicting that gas prices could hit $3 a gallon during the summer driving season. Economist

- **Bush Energy Secretary Testified the Administration Would Not Ask OPEC to Halt Scheduled Production Cuts.** Despite Bush's promise to use the United States' world capital to negotiate reasonable gas prices, Secretary of Energy Spencer Abraham testified before a Senate Committee in March that the Administration would not publicly call upon OPEC to halt production cuts that were to go into effect on April 1st. Consequently, OPEC instituted its planned production cuts and gas prices have gone up more then three cents a gallon on average in the United States. [Daschle Letter to President Bush, 3/30/04, New York Times, 4/1/04,U.S. Retail Gasoline Prices]

Bush White House, Republicans: The Great Oil Party

It is not surprising President Bush has failed to live up to his campaign promise to "jawbone" OPEC, given his Administration's close ties to lobbyists and insiders in the oil and gas industry.

Bush White House: Packed with Polluters. From the highest-level staffers on down, the Bush Administration has former oil and gas industry lobbyists and special interests installed in key positions:

Bush Insider	Connection to Big Oil & Energy
Vice President Dick Cheney	Cheney was the CEO of Halliburton from 1995 to 2000 – an oil field services company that has profited from no-bid contracts in Iraq and admitted overcharging taxpayers millions of dollars. Cheney received $178,437 in deferred payments from Halliburton in 2003 [CNN.com, Yahoo! 2003]
White House Chief of Staff Andrew Card	Card was General Motors' chief lobbyist for a year and served as the CEO of the American Automobile Manufacturers Association. [NRDC]
Sec. of Commerce Don Evans	Evans worked for Denver-based oil and gas company Tom Brown, Inc. for 25 years and was a board member of TMBR/Sharp Drilling, an oil and drilling organization. [NRDC]
Sec. of Interior Gale Norton	Norton was a senior attorney for the Mountain States Legal Foundation, a controversial group formed by former Interior Secretary James Watt and funded by mining, logging, oil and grazing interests such as Texaco, Exxon, and Chevron. [Washington Post, 1/8/01, The Associated Press State & Local Wire, 2/11/99; The Fresno Bee, 9/4/00; Ventura County Star, 9/1/00; The New York Times, 1/31/01, Chemical Market Reporter, 8/17/98]
Fmr. Dep. Sec. of Interior, J. Steven Griles	Griles was a lobbyist for National Environmental Strategies, where he represented a number of energy companies, including Shell Oil, Texaco, Arch Coal, Chevron and the National Mining Association. At the White House Griles continued to receive deferred compensation worth $284,000 a year (for four years). Though Griles had signed an agreement to recuse himself from making any client related decisions, he allegedly met dozens of times with clients of his former firm. [Friends of the Earth, The Seattle Post-Intelligencer, 7/14/01, Palm Beach Post, 10/2/03, New York Times, 7/2/03]

Bush Insider	Connection to Big Oil & Energy
Fmr. Asst. Sec. of Energy Dan Brouillette	Brouillette was a lobbyist for mining and oil companies.[Warstories:CC - Dan Brouillette, Washington Post, 4/1/04]
Asst. Sec. of Energy Vickey Bailey	Bailey was the President of PSI Energy Inc., Indiana's largest electric supplier and the Indiana operating company of Cinergy Corp. [Regulatory Intelligence Data, 8/3/01,NRDC]
Fmr. Dep. Sec. of Energy Francis S. Blake	Blake was the Senior Vice President of Corporate Business Development at General Electric. [DOE Presidential Appointees Sworn In, San Francisco Chronicle, 5/13/03, Washington Post, 3/2/02]
Asst. Administrator at EPA Jeffrey Holmstead	Holmstead was a lawyer at Latham & Watkins, where he represented the Alliance for Constructive Air Policy – an association including companies like Cinergy – in their effort to halt an EPA plan to reduce smog. [Christian Science Monitor, 11/14/03]
Acting EPA Administrator Marianne Lamont Horinko	Horinko was the president of Don Clay Associates, an environmental consulting firm that represented Koch Petroleum. [Christian Science Monitor, 11/14/03]

The Bush Administration and Republicans in Congress Have Taken Millions of Dollars from Energy Interests. So far this cycle, President Bush is the single biggest recipient of contributions from the energy industry, taking in a whopping $3.2 million from leading energy interests since 2002, alone. Overall, Republicans have raised millions of dollars from the very companies at the center of the Cheney Energy Task Force scandal, including:

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE GRAND OIL PARTY

- **Nuclear Energy Institute**: $476,404
- **Edison Electric Institute**: $675,387
- **United States Enrichment Corporation**: $40,500
- **National Mining Association:** $752,564
- **Westinghouse:** $70,110
- **American Gas Association:** $483,978
- **CMS Energy**: $398,555
- **Southern Company**:$1.8 million
- **American Petroleum Institute:** $59,826
- **Exelon Corporation:** $1.1 million
- **Enron Corporation:** $2.5 million

Source: NRDC Press Archive: Data Shows Industry had Extensive Access to Cheney's Energy Task Force, www.opensecrets.org

Bush's "Pioneers" From Oil and Gas Industry. Bush's connection to the companies involved in the energy task force scandal goes beyond their campaign contributions to Republicans: Six of the Bush-Cheney Pioneers come from top oil and gas companies.

- Dwight Evans (2004 Pioneer): Executive Vice President of Southern Co.
- Anthony Alexander (2000 & 2004 Pioneer): President of FirstEnergy
- Thomas Kuhn (2000 and 2004 Pioneer): President of the Edison Electric Institute (EEI)
- Erle A. Nye (2000 and 2004 Pioneer): Chairman and CEO of TXU
- Ronald Steve Letbetter (2000 Pioneer): Former CEO of Reliant Energy
- Don D. Jordan (2000 Pioneer): Former Chairman of Reliant

Source: http://www.whitehouseforsale.org/documents/EnergyBillBooty.pdf

GOP Energy Policy FAILS to Lower Gas Prices

President *Bush's energy policy failures go far beyond his flip flop on standing up to OPEC. Bush has offered no solution to rising gas prices and has failed to provide a roadmap for reducing our dependence on foreign energy sources and fossil fuels.*

Bush, Republican Energy Bill Would INCREASE Gas Prices. According to the Department of Energy Information Administration (EIA), the Bush/Republican Energy bill would actually increase consumer gas prices by nearly $7 billion over the next ten years.
[http://www.eia.doe.gov/oiaf/servicerpt/eleg/pdf/sroiaf(2003)04.pdf].

Bush Policy Driving Up Prices at the Pump. Just as gas prices are reaching record highs, Bush's refusal to temporarily suspend diverting oil to the Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR) is pushing gasoline supplies even higher by taking hundreds of thousands of barrels out of the market. According to the watchdog group Public Citizen, since 2001, Bush has taken 100,000 barrels of oil every day out of the market to stock the SPR.
[http://www.citizen.org/documents/oilmergers.pdf]

TALKING POINTS: HOW WILL THE GOP EXPLAIN THEIR DISMAL ECONOMIC RECORD?

This week, the Republican leadership will hold a press conference announcing their new "Hire Our Workers" initiative (HOW), a new public relations offensive to repackage their special interest agenda as a plan to create jobs. But with 2.8 million manufacturing jobs lost in 48 states and a $3 trillion national deficit, the Republicans have a lot of work to do to explain HOW they have helped middle class Americans.

Democrats will be out on the floor this week – and beyond – to ask the Republicans the questions that are really on Americans' minds:

- **HOW will this special interest agenda help American workers?**
- **HOW can Republicans explain 2.8 million manufacturing jobs lost over the past three years?**
- **HOW do Republicans justify sending over a million jobs overseas?**

Republicans are desperate to hide the reality that their economic policies have permitted job losses at levels not seen since the Great Depression. But Democrats have a plan to jumpstart America's economy and put people back to work:

Democrats are working to create manufacturing jobs. Manufacturing job losses continue to mount and Republicans have done nothing to stop it. Democrats are pushing a bipartisan solution to cut taxes for domestic manufacturers and help them create good paying jobs here in the United States. We want to eliminate unfair tax rules that allow corporations to keep their money and their workers overseas.

Democrats are fighting to return to fiscal responsibility. Democrats support responsible "pay as you go" provisions that require tax cuts to be paid for, just like new spending. This means that Republicans will have to make the hard choices and defend their priorities, rather than simply hiding the cost, increasing the deficit, and piling debt on our children.

Democrats support common sense measures to create jobs. Democrats want to extend tax cuts for middle class working families, help small businesses provide health care for their employees, invest in job training for workers in transition, pass a strong six year highway bill, and extend unemployment benefits for 2.9 million unemployed workers. Democrats also want to close corporate tax loopholes that let big corporations get away with not paying their fair share.

FACT SHEET:
HOW WILL THE GOP EXPLAIN THEIR DISMAL ECONOMIC RECORD?

This week, the Republican leadership will hold a press conference announcing their new "Hire Our Workers" initiative (HOW), which attempts to paint the passage of their special interest agenda as a plan to create jobs. But with 2.8 million manufacturing jobs lost in 48 states and a $3 trillion national deficit, the Republicans have a lot of work to do to explain HOW they are going to help middle class Americans. Democrats have a responsible plan to create jobs now and help all Americans achieve financial security with new efforts to keep good jobs for American workershere rather than overseas.

Manufacturing job losses mount, but Republicans refuse to pass bipartisan reform. States like Michigan (136,000 manufacturing jobs lost), Pennsylvania (159,100 manufacturing jobs lost), and Wisconsin (79,600 manufacturing jobs lost) are bearing the brunt of the economic downturn, but Republicans still refuse to pass bipartisan reform that would help revitalize our manufacturing sector. The bipartisan Rangel-Crane-Manzullo-Levin bill would bring America into compliance with recent WTO rulings, and lower tax rates on US manufacturers to keep good jobs at home. It is fully paid for, and would not increase the deficit. But because Republicans refuse to pass this bill, farmers, ranchers, and manufacturers could pay hundreds of millions in tariffs on their goods, making their products harder to sell.

Irresponsible tax breaks created record deficits that are slowing growth. The Bush Administration's irresponsible tax breaks for the wealthy turned a $5.6 trillion surplus into a $3 trillion deficit. Half the benefits of the new tax bill go to the wealthiest 5 percent of tax filers. In 2005, 74 percent of Americans will get less than $100 from the Bush tax breaks, while all of our families will have to pay a mounting "debt tax" caused by record budget deficits.

Republicans refuse to support a strong highway bill that will create over 1.8 million jobs. The GOP reliance on short-term extensions and the failure to compromise on a real highway bill has cost America almost 100,000 jobs already.

Bush Administration slashes funding for programs designed to help manufacturers. The Bush budget cuts the Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP), which helps U.S. manufacturers with everything from plant modernization to employee training, by nearly two-thirds, meaning that 11,000 small manufacturers will not receive services and 28,000 workers will either be laid off or not hired. It also proposes to eliminate the Advanced Technology Program, which spurs cutting-edge research to solve manufacturing problems.

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Enron Tapes Anger Lawmakers

LOS ANGELES, June 2, 2004

During California's rolling blackouts, when streets were lit only by head lights and families were trapped in elevators, Enron Energy traders laughed, reports **CBS News Correspondent Vince Gonzales**.

One trader is heard on tapes obtained by **CBS News** saying, "Just cut 'em off. They're so f----d. They should just bring back f-----g horses and carriages, f-----g lamps, f-----g kerosene lamps."

And when describing his reaction when a business owner complained about high energy prices, another trader is heard on tape saying, "I just looked at him. I said, 'Move.' (laughter) The guy was like horrified. I go, 'Look, don't take it the wrong way. Move. It isn't getting fixed anytime soon."

California's attempt to deregulate energy markets became a disaster for consumers when companies like Enron manipulated the West Cost power market and even shut down plants so they could drive up prices.

There was quick reaction in Washington to the Enron audiotapes first aired by **CBS News** last night, and the tapes have become part of the debate over the President's massive energy bill.

"People were talking about market manipulation. People were talking about schemes, people were making jokes," said U.S. Sen. Maria Cantwell, D-Wash.

"While the president would like to have an energy bill, I'd like to have an energy bill that protects consumers," said Cantwell.

Consumers like Grandma Millie, mentioned in one exchange recorded between two Enron employees.

Employee 1: "All the money you guys stole from those poor grandmothers in California?

Employee 2: "Yeah, Grandma Millie man.

Employee 1: "Yeah, now she wants her f-----g money back for all the power you've charged right up, jammed right up her a—for f-----g $250 a megawatt hour."

It's clear from the tapes that Enron employees knew what they were doing was wrong, and now lawmakers are responding.

"I will offer an amendment to compel the Bush administration t oget off the dime and get back this money that has been stolen," said Rep. Jay Inslee, D-Wash.

Another taped exchange between different employees regarding a possible newspaper interview goes like this:

Employee 3: "This guy from the Wall Street Journal calls me up a little bit ago…"

Employee 4: "I wouldn't do it, because first of all you'd have to tell 'em a lot of lies because if you told the truth…"

Employee 3: "I'd get in trouble."

Employee 4: "You'd get in trouble."

Eventually, the lies unraveled and traders scrambled.

"I'm just -- f--k -- I'm just trying to be an honest camper so I only go to jail once," says one employee.

Two Enron traders, from the office where the tapes were made, have admitted manipulating energy prices and pled guilty in court. Another goes on trial in October. Former Enron chief Ken Lay is the only top company official who has never been charged with any crime.